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Winter continues in the Short Grass Country. Record lows have been tallied in the past week. Cold winds have chilled the early greenery. Feed wagons that were parked are on standby orders.

Herders are in a state of unrest. Markets are causing them to take on the silent stares, and conversation is difficult to carry on in the coffee house. Late frosts and boycotters have knocked the bloom from the boom times. Lots of muttering is going on. The hombres are preparing for a withdrawal movement, all the be held, they fear, at their expense.

Sick wool futures have added to the uncertainty. Wool activity changed from wildfire to a glimmer as feeble as a birthday candle's flame. Japanese merchants, we've heard, are off the market while Boston buyers seem to have disappeared.

Growers are being assured that the only reason the domestic action has halted is because the mills are short of money. To a sheepman, that alibi sounds about as plausible as claiming that daylight saving time is going to shorten the duration of the seven year itch.

If Shortgrassers had quit buying the first time they ran short of money, the country would still be unfenced. Our forefathers would have bucked out from under a billfold. The first settlers were so broke that the Indians had to help them finance the free land.

Of all the lame excuses ever offered, being short of money is the poorest of the lot. Married men do better than that.

Cattle and sheep buyers consider a short cash situation a stimulant to get busy. Feedlot men retire when they start using their own capital. As to ranchers, money, or at least the lack of it, has never bothered us. Until the draft started before World War II, four-bit pieces could have been passed off as \$20 gold coins in any outpost in the ranch country. Lots of these boys were 21 years old before they knew anyone was rich except deadwool buyers and bank inspectors.

It beats anything I ever heard of. Woolmen are sure lucky they spin fiber instead of raising it. If they're too timid to borrow money, they wouldn't last long enough in the sheep business to wear out their first application of underarm deodorant.

Sheepmen are constantly in arrears. As long as man has been dragging sheep through gates, he's owed money against them. When Noah shoved his flock down the gangplank to dry land, he had to get a release from the bank to dock them.

An old ewe can't rally the energy to die unless she bears a mortgage about triple the worth of her productive life. Livestock bankers would long since have collapsed from boredom without woolies to excite their attention.

Farmers and ranchers take great pride in the farm debt. In this age of easy loans and fastdraw credit cards, that's the only field in which we've stayed ahead of the rest of the nation. City people can't finance enough cars or bungalows to outdo us. Only the politicians can borrow more against less than we can.

Surely the wool buyers aren't holding back from a lack of money. They are probably off on a consumers' strike. The Japanese, I know, are in bad shape. An article in the paper the other day said that Jap kids were eating their pet gold fish.

Spirits are low in our part of the country. Riding a market down isn't ever as comfortable as it is to ride one up. Maybe it's only as bad as it looks. Spring could change it all.